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**United States Senate**  
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The President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I am very concerned about the news that Mary Gade, the Regional Administrator for EPA Region 5, has been placed on administrative leave. These actions have, once again, left the Environmental Protection Agency with the appearance that it is placing the interests of big polluters ahead of protecting local communities and the environment. I urge you to act swiftly to fill this important position with an administrator who will protect Lake Michigan and the communities that surround it. Given the critical environmental issues that this office must address, we cannot afford delay or inaction.

News of Ms. Gade's removal came on the same day that Indiana forwarded its final draft air permit for the BP Whiting plant to EPA Region 5 for its review. Region 5 also faces other very important matters involving the health of Lake Michigan and the residents who live on its shores. While I did not always agree with the positions Ms. Gade took as the Administrator of Region 5, it seems shortsighted to leave the region without a regional administrator -- especially at this time. EPA Region 5 needs the active leadership of an administrator who puts the environment first.

I have asked for a meeting with the Administrator of EPA so that I can better understand why Ms. Gade has been placed on administrative leave, and whether press reports that it was because she had been taking a stand for the environment against strong corporate opposition are accurate.

I again urge you to quickly select someone who has strong credentials as a protector of the environment so that this important position does not remain open, especially in light of the pending environmental issues facing our region.

Sincerely,



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator